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CONGRESS AND ITS CRITICS.

BY SENATOR H. C. HANSBROUGH; THE HON. NELSON DINGLEY,
JR., CHAIRMAN OF THE WAYS AND MEANS COMMITTEE;
REPRESENTATIVES W. ELLIOTT (S. C.), GEO. B.
M'CLELLAN (N. Y.), AND CHAS. P. TAFT (O.).

f.

THE senator or representative who quails before unjust and undeserved criticism and takes fright at the flash and whiz of editorial pyrotechnics emanating from the metropolitan press, is entirely out of place in the American Congress. A great statesman once said that he "would rather be right than be President." This is sublime enough to be made the motto of every man who is called upon to assist in framing the laws of his country. It is, has been and will continue to be the motto of the great majority of our national legislators.

If this were an era of selfishness, mendacity and venality, as many thoughtful people fear it is, the attitude of the great daily papers toward the Congress of the United States would be in strict keeping with the times. For the sake of the country and its free institutions, let us hope that these publications are, as they claim to be, somewhat in advance of the age, and that they are not soon to be overtaken.

There have been some rapid, even wonderful, changes in journalistic methods and policies from those that existed prior to and during the hazardous days of our civil war, when the double-leaded editorial breathed a deep love of country and the ambition of the foremost writers and publishers was grounded upon a sincere and devoted regard in behalf of a strong spirit of American patriotism. In this age the only real "free press" is the country press, supplemented by the leading magazines. According to

the ethics of the metropolitan press, men and measures are written up or written down not upon their merit, but upon their relationship to the sordid interests of the stockholders of the "great dailies."

The people who rail most at Congress are, first, the thoughtless and irresponsible, and those persons who are making a daily failure of life; and, second, those writers who are obliged to draw inspiration from the business department of their respective publications. No man can, nor is he expected to, write his true convictions while his bondsman's club hangs, like the Damoclean sword, immediately over his head. The writer in greatest demand is the one having the most picturesque vocabulary of effective and effulgent adjectives with which to hurl scorn and contumely upon the heads of public men. This kind of pabulum pleases class one, above mentioned, because it supplies them with new and novel epithets; it also pleases the business management of the paper, because it swells the subscription list.

Congress, as a body, is the main object of attack, by reason of its greater prominence among our other institutions, and because its members have the good sense not to reply in kind. They know that a just public sentiment will ultimately sustain the right, and happily for this republic of ours, public sentiment is not necessarily the monopolized creature of the metropolitan press.

A most remarkable policy was recently inaugurated by some of the daily papers published in New York city. Matters in Washington did not seem to be progressing to suit their tastes, and the cry was raised against the "silver Senate." Certain members of that body were severely arraigned for "misrepresenting their constituencies," and threats were freely indulged in that these obnoxious senators would be promptly defeated for re-election. Samples of the character of the detraction which seems suddenly to have been inspired and given currency in the New York papers about the time of the last gold bond deal may not be out of place here. Referring to the attitude of one prominent senator, whose honesty and integrity are without question among those who know him, it was said that he would

"Disobey the injunctions of his State and invite the fate of a political recusant—if traitor is too harsh a word—if he follows the course he has apparently chosen."

Another New York paper told how the gold senators were being contaminated, socially and otherwise, by the senators who believe in and favor bimetallism :

"There are members of the United States Senate, Democrats and Republicans, who by their habits and past careers are objectionable to honorable and straightforward senators who for an instant would not attempt to betray their constituents on financial legislation or anything else. Yet these conservative and honorable senators are compelled to a certain extent to associate while in the Senate with these delinquent members. As for any social recognition of them, that is and has been entirely out of the question."

It is significant that in connection with these threatening and disparaging criticisms a list of the senators who are under the ban of the metropolitan press was published simultaneously by several journals holding like views on the financial question, showing that the list must have been supplied to all of them from one and the same source. The publication of this list brought forth the following statement from an Illinois newspaper whose editor appears still to be a free man and to be the guardian of his own thoughts and actions :

"The New York bankers have prepared a black list of the United States senators who displease them, and have sent word to the Republican and Democratic committees of eighteen states notifying the committees of their displeasure. The Republican and Democratic conventions hereafter must submit their nominations to Wall Street for confirmation. A better way perhaps would be for Wall Street to furnish the nominations for both parties in the first place."

And so the war of words goes on, class being arrayed against class, section against section, and interest against interest. Meantime Congress proceeds to perform its constitutional duties with an ever-watchful eye to the common welfare.

A Washington correspondent draws this comparison between statesmen of years ago and those of to-day :

"It ought to be a great thing to be a senator of the United States. In years gone by it has been the coveted prize of some of the greatest and ablest statesmen in the two ruling parties. In those days there were no sneers for the intelligence and integrity of a large proportion of the senators."

"In those days" there were no degenerate newspapers to do the bidding of men bent upon the acquirement of vast wealth at any hazard. I hope I shall be pardoned the laudation of a body of which I have the very great honor of being a member when I

say that the Senate of to-day is the peer of any of its predecessors. This is conceded by many of the ablest students, historical and political, who are in a position to judge impartially. Senatorial ability is not of mushroom growth ; it comes in consequence of long and faithful service. The statesmanship of the present Senate is to be found in those whose heads are whitened by time and arduous experience. It has been so since the establishment of the body, and will continue to be so. The younger senators, of whom I am one, lay no claim to statesmanship. It is enough for the present if we may absorb it gradually from our senior colleagues ; surely we shall never get it from the metropolitan press.

I trust that I shall not be understood as censuring the individual writers whose bread, we know, depends upon their ability to hold their places. The fault (and this is a mild term) rests elsewhere. As I have stated, it emanates from those persons interested in the financial receipts. It belongs to and is a constituent part of the tyranny that holds the stop-watch in the maddening race for wealth and power. A case in point may better illustrate my proposition. I have a friend who edits a good-sized daily paper in a Western city. This daily, too, has a business office. My friend is personally hostile to the business-blighting gold standard of value that has been foisted upon this country of seventy millions of people by England so that her forty millions may obtain cheap food products. He told me that for several years he had editorially espoused an American system of finance, to the great gratification of his modest and unbiased readers. One day in 1893, just before the convening of the extra session of Congress, the business manager of the paper entered the sanctum occupied by my bimetallic friend, and said, in language that pierced the very vitals of his silver certificate salary, that the policy of the paper must change ; that the banker around the corner had been to see the big dry goods merchant in the next block and notified him that if he (the merchant) continued to advertise in "that fifty-cent dollar paper," he must at once pay his notes held by the bank. The advertisement was discontinued. The banker, under orders, no doubt, from his Eastern creditors, went further : he gave directions that no patronage whatever should go from the bank to the paper until the latter changed its financial policy. "I am now

writing gold editorials," said my friend, "but my heart is not in my work and my patriotism is stifled."

That there are thousands of cases of this kind throughout the country there can be no doubt. When the bond buyers decided to repeal the Sherman law the metropolitan press was with them, and every banker in the United States received from the central bond-buyers' offices in New York and Boston imperative instructions to throttle the local press, if possible, and at once see their senators and representatives and instruct them to vote for repeal. The senators and representatives who refused to be "instructed" are the ones who are now being attacked by the metropolitan press. They are pilloried for the convictions they hold, and are threatened with defeat if they do not change their financial views.

Does any one believe that the hostility of the metropolitan press toward Congress is due primarily to a desire on its part for the prosperity of the substantial interests of the country? Is it not based, without variation, upon conditions in "the street," where the acquirement of wealth has made gambling respectable, and where bond syndicates, with contracts fat enough to afford liberal dividends, are worshipped as were the false deities in the temple of Isis? Of what consequence is the humble senator or representative in Congress who, under his oath of office, strives to determine with impartiality the great questions before him, and to deal with them with a view to the greatest good to the greatest number, in comparison with the man in Wall Street, who has acquired sudden and Croesian wealth by wrecking a railroad or establishing a new monopoly to oppress his countrymen?

The high calling of the journalist has fallen into disrepute by reason of the business methods employed in the conduct of the modern dailies. It was John Dryden who invoked the help of the Allwise to aid him to "do and live as he believed." This should be the daily prayer of all our "moulders of public opinion."

HENRY C. HANSBROUGH.

II.

THE press of this country represents with a considerable degree of accuracy the varying currents of public opinion. While

every phase of thought finds newspaper advocacy, yet it is never difficult to discover in the utterances of the press a predominant consensus of judgment which clearly indicates the trend of public sentiment.

It is for this reason that the attitude of the press towards the Fifty-fourth Congress may be justly regarded as the attitude of the country, and on that account worthy of careful attention and thoughtful reflection.

The marked difference in the attitude of the press towards the Senate and the House—the two bodies constituting the Congress of the United States—directs attention to the fact that the two Houses are constituted of controlling political elements as wide apart as the poles ; so wide apart that the approval of the work of the one body necessarily implies disapproval of the other.

This wide difference is made possible not simply by the fact that senators are elected for a term of six years, and representatives for a term of only two years, but also by the fact that representation in the House is based on population, while each state is entitled to two senators regardless of the number of inhabitants. Thus it comes to pass that Nevada, with only 45,761 population, has the same power of legislation in the Senate that New York has, with a population of over 5,000,000 ; while in the House New York has 34 representatives and Nevada only one. A suggestive illustration of the diverse results of the workings of these two bases of representation is afforded by the fact that the provision for the free coinage of silver at the ratio of sixteen to one passed the Senate a few weeks ago by the votes of a majority of senators representing only about one-third of the population of the country, while the same measure was defeated in the House, where the representation is on the basis of population, by a vote of more than two to one.

It thus happens that the attitude of the majority of the press, as well as a majority of the people of the United States, is one of favor towards the Republican House and disfavor towards the anti-Republican Senate ; an anti-Republican Senate, not only because of the eighty-nine senators now constituting that body—there being one vacancy in Delaware—thirty-nine are Democrats and six populists, while only forty-four are recorded as Republicans ; but also from the fact that some of the so-called silver Republicans have been ready to unite with Populists and Democrats to

thus far defeat every distinctively Republican measure that has gone from the House.

The prompt action of the Republican House in passing in a single week a bill to increase the revenue about \$40,000,000, in order to meet the current expenditures of the Government, and prevent further deficiencies; and another bill not only looking to a reduction of the rate of interest, and to a popular sale of bonds already authorized by the Resumption Act of 1875, but also practically separating the proceeds of such loans from the resources available for current expenditures, received the approval of so large a majority of the newspapers of the country as to make it clear that the people endorsed this action and the promptness which characterized it.

A majority of the press, comprising not simply the papers of Republican tendencies, but also a considerable number of Democratic papers, have clearly pointed out that an increase of revenue is essential to a restoration of the finances of the nation to the sound condition which existed from 1879 to 1893. Before the recent loan was made there had been issued and sold about \$163,000,000 of four and five per cent. bonds, from which had been realized about \$182,000,000 in gold. All of this gold has been used in redeeming \$182,000,000 in greenbacks. Instead of temporarily holding these redeemed legal tender notes in the Treasury and thus promptly stopping the raid by creating a scarcity of greenbacks, the Secretary of the Treasury has been obliged since July 1, 1893, to pay out \$135,000,000 of these redeemed legal tender notes, and thus has furnished that amount of new greenbacks to again withdraw an equal amount of gold from the Treasury, thus necessitating an additional sale of bonds. And this performance is still going on, inasmuch as in the first fifteen days of February there was a deficiency of revenue amounting to nearly four millions of dollars, which was met by paying out four millions of redeemed greenbacks, which were undoubtedly again used in the balance of the month to draw four millions more of gold from the Treasury. And this will go on until the revenue is sufficiently increased to meet the expenditures.

While this practical view of the necessity of additional revenue has caused a majority of the press to express approval of the prompt action of the Republican House in passing a bill to temporarily increase the revenue, it has also led them to condemn

the neglect, if not the refusal, of the Senate to promptly concur in a measure to supply the Treasury with the requisite means to meet the current expenses of government.

Notwithstanding, the bill which passed the House, looking to the reduction of the rate of interest and the term of bonds issued under the act of 1875, is of less importance than the bill to provide additional revenue. Yet public opinion, as expressed by a large majority of the newspapers of the country, entertains no doubt that if the Senate had promptly concurred with the House in its passage, and the President had approved it, there would have been no difficulty in disposing of three per cent. bonds at par in lieu of the recent hundred million four per cent. loan, which sold at a premium of more than eight per cent. less than the equivalent of a three per cent. bond at par, thus involving a loss of nearly eight millions on that loan alone.

For this reason, as well as for the further reason that the House bond bill would have practically prevented the use of redeemed greenbacks in paying current expenditures in excess of revenue, the utterances of a large majority of the press of the country have approved of the action of the House and condemned the action of the majority of the Senate in substituting for the House bill a measure providing for the free and unlimited coinage of silver by this country alone at the ratio of sixteen to one.

When the Republican House, by the decided vote of 215 to 90—183 Republicans and 32 Democrats voting to non-concur and 25 Republicans and 58 Democrats and 7 Populists to concur—refused to agree to the Senate free coinage substitute, the well-nigh universal indorsement which this action received from the Republican and Independent press, and the approval which it received from thousands of Democratic papers, made it clear that the House represents on this question the settled judgment of a large majority of the American people, as well as the nearly unanimous conviction of the business men of the nation.

It is not too much to say that the friendly attitude of a large majority of the press towards the national House indicates an increasing confidence not only in the good sense, statesmanship and conservatism of the popular branch, which has been heretofore supposed to be most influenced by temporary conditions, but also in the Republican party which controls the House by so large a majority.

Even those papers which have criticised the House for not doing more than it has done, after witnessing the proceedings of the anti-Republican Senate, are rapidly reaching the conclusion that the House has done, or is likely to do in essential directions, all that had the slightest chance of securing the approval of an anti-Republican Senate and a Democratic President ; indeed, far more than will receive such approval ; and that it would have been unwise to go further in proposing Republican measures of vital importance with the certainty that they could not become laws, and with the probability that the hostile reception which such measures would encounter might increase the distrust that already exists in the country.

NELSON DINGLEY, JR.

III.

THE Venezuela question was the first subject of engrossing interest to occupy the attention of the Fifty-fourth Congress. Both Houses have been sharply criticised for what has been called their precipitate action in immediately passing the bill which was carried through the House by unanimous consent on the day following the receipt of the President's message. Undoubtedly the action of Congress was influenced somewhat by party considerations, but, in the main, I think both Republicans and Democrats were guided in their course chiefly by purely patriotic motives. As to the influence of party politics, I think it operated no further than this—the Republicans suspected the President somewhat of precipitating the question upon Congress by his aggressive message for the purpose of bolstering up the waning fortunes of his party and were determined not to be outdone by him in patriotic fervor, while the Democrats naturally felt that it would never do for them to block the course of a Democratic President. It must be borne in mind that the subject had received the most careful consideration of the Executive, that it had been most elaborately discussed with Lord Salisbury, and that negotiations had arrived at such a stage that there seemed no possibility of ending the matter by diplomatic negotiations. The reasons that specially influenced us in our action were that the President simply wanted means for ascertaining the truth in a matter of momentous importance, that, while the course

proposed by him involved most serious hazard how it would be received by Great Britain, yet it seemed to be the only feasible course not necessarily involving war, that it committed Congress to no policy, that it would be simply impossible to refuse the request of the President and that, as there had already been developed a most serious difference between the two countries, we would be weakening our own side by exhibiting to Great Britain a divided front. It is a curious fact that, when the bill was brought into the House and unanimous consent asked for its consideration, the only gentleman who seemed to find much difficulty in suppressing an objection was Mr. Boutelle, of Maine, who, to use his own language, had been "accused in times past of being somewhat of a jingo." Undoubtedly within a very few hours afterwards, when it was seen what intense excitement and what irreparable injury had been wrought by the apparent danger of war, many a member of the House wished that he had had the pluck to do what Mr. Boutelle was so much tempted to do, and call a halt. And this, too, especially on the part of those who felt that there could be no greater public calamity than a war between the United States and Great Britain, that it would be a disaster of unspeakable horrors, and who, moreover, felt a great deal of sympathy in the main reason put forward by Lord Salisbury for declining arbitration, that it involved "the transfer of large numbers of British subjects, who have for many years enjoyed the settled rule of a British colony, to a nation of different race and language, whose political system is subject to frequent disturbance, and whose institutions as yet too often afford very inadequate protection to life and property": a reason which Lord Salisbury suggested would induce the United States to "be equally firm in declining to entertain proposals of such a nature." At least I can speak for myself in this regard. But at last have we not been fully justified by the result? The most serious consideration after the first storm of excitement had passed away was that the British Government would feel compelled to refuse recognition in any way of our Venezuela Commission and in fact might very well consider it as an act of aggression. But this one obstacle to a peaceful solution of the quarrel has disappeared in Lord Salisbury's hearty consent to afford the Commission all the aid that his government can give towards arriving at an ascertainment of the facts.

Right on the heels of the Venezuela matter, and growing out of it, came the Revenue and Bond bills ; and here an impartial judge must, we think, decide that the Republican majority in the House immediately dropped the rôle of pure and unadulterated devotion to public interest and lapsed very easily into that of coddling the fortunes of the Republican party. What was the situation that confronted Congress ? The President in his annual message, and the Secretary of the Treasury in his report, had set forth in the most emphatic terms the deplorable condition of the Treasury caused by the "endless chain" system ; that no sooner was the gold reserve strengthened by the sale of bonds than it would be immediately depleted by the presentation of greenbacks and treasury notes, making another issue of bonds necessary ; and they most urgently impressed on Congress the imperative necessity for retiring these demand notes, and thus putting a stop to the drain on the gold reserve and the imposition on the people of additional and unnecessary burdens by the sale of bonds. What they further most pointedly showed was that it was not simply money that was wanted—they had plenty of that ; there was then in the Treasury a surplus of over \$70,000,000, exclusive of the gold reserve—but it was a particular kind of money, gold, that the protection of the government credit and the national honor demanded. The President had showed that by the "exasperating withdrawals of gold" the gold reserve was substantially in no better condition than when the bond sales were first made. He stated that the conditions were aggravated by the financial crisis then upon us, and brought about by the Venezuela complication, and he almost begged that Congress would make at least a legislative "declaration" in maintenance of the national credit. In hot haste, the Republican majority in the House submitted their remedy for the situation in the shape of a revenue bill to raise by tariff taxation \$40,000,000 additional annually. Was there ever before such a performance ? The President said that he wanted no additional revenue, that there was already a surplus of over \$70,000,000—they gave him \$40,000,000 more a year ; he showed that it was gold alone that he wanted, and they gave him a revenue bill that notoriously produced not one dollar in gold ; he appealed for action that would relieve the people from the burden of further unnecessary taxation, and they immediately put

on the country an additional burden of \$40,000,000 a year ; he asked for aid “ to prevent in a time of fear and apprehension any sacrifice of the people’s interests and the public funds or the impairment of our public credit,” and they promptly responded with a bill for an increase of the tariff which they well knew his public record would impel him to veto. Again we ask—was there ever such a performance ?

While the bond bill, which was introduced in the House the day after the revenue bill was passed, was not as objectionable as that bill, it had some serious defects. It substantially provided for the issue of three per cent. bonds, payable *in coin*, and redeemable by the Government after five years. In February, 1895, when the contract was made with the syndicate for the sale of \$62,000,000 of thirty-year four per cent. bonds, payable *in coin*, the President then informed Congress that it was a part of the contract that should Congress authorize the substitution of bonds payable in *gold* such substitution could be made, and that more than \$16,000,000 would be thereby saved to the government ; and in his late annual message the President had re-stated this fact. Now here was legislation that, unlike the revenue bill, was aimed in the right direction, but could not possibly reach the mark. Why were not the bonds made payable in *gold* ? Has it not been the invariable custom for the government to pay all bonds in *gold*, although by their terms made payable in *silver* as well ? And why not authorize the issue of *gold* bonds, and thus get for the government the enormous benefit which would accrue ? And what better “legislative declaration” in support of the national credit could have been made than this ? But no ; the Republican majority did not wish to inject the silver question into the discussion, and so with all these solid inducements leading them in one direction, they purposely took the other. And it must be borne in mind that, as to both these bills, by the rule under which they were considered, no amendments of any kind were permitted—they had to go through just as they were or not go through at all.

What has been the outcome in the Senate on these two bills ? The Revenue bill, that was rushed through the House post-haste in order to give the government instant relief, has just been completely side-tracked by a decisive vote of the Senate, refusing even to consider it. As to the Bond bill, all after

the enacting clause was struck out by the Senate and an entirely new bill substituted, providing substantially for the free and unlimited coinage of silver at the ratio of 16 to 1. Clearly the judgment of the Senate coincides with the opinion of Senator Teller that it was never intended by the House that either bill should become a law and that they were proposed simply for the purpose of making "political capital."

The Senate free coinage substitute came to a vote in the House on February 14, and was defeated by the extraordinary vote of 215 to 90. If all the power and parliamentary skill of the Republican leaders in the House had been concentrated upon bringing about this result they could not have done a better day's work for the country, and yet it was the very question of all others that they dreaded, and tried their best to evade. They have literally blundered into the right. And what a wonderful commentary all this affords upon the boasted success of political *finesse* and manœuvring. The House, after struggling so hard to get away from the silver question, has, by means of it, achieved a great success, while the silver Senators, bent apparently only on advancing their cause, have invited the heaviest defeat it has ever suffered.

W.M. ELLIOTT.

IV.

If a general election had been held on the first Monday of December, 1895, no politician will deny that the Republican party would have swept the country. The vote for Speaker of the House of Representatives of the Fifty-fourth Congress fairly indicates the strength of the two great parties on that day. Thomas B. Reed received 239 votes; Charles F. Crisp received 95 votes. The session is less than three months old. The recognized leader of the Republican party is as able a parliamentarian and as brilliant a politician as ever, and yet the tremendous majority of the House of Representatives over which he has had the misfortune to preside has proved itself unmanageable. It has broken away from him. It is divided into cliques ruled by fads and local prejudices. The Republican party likes to be called the party of high moral ideas. If we are to believe the dictionary in use among Republicans, the expression, "high moral ideas,"

exclusively refers to the power of making votes. The majority began the present session bubbling over with patriotic enthusiasm to save the country by making the election of a President in 1896 a certainty, and incidentally capturing the spoils of war. It set itself the task of proving to the people that the Democratic Administration had been a failure.

The Secretary of the Treasury stated in his annual report that, with a rapidly decreasing deficit and increasing revenues, there was an available balance in the Treasury of approximately \$172,000,000. In a most able argument in favor of sound money the Secretary implored Congress to relieve the country from the endless chain of irredeemable greenbacks.

On December 17th last the President sent to Congress his Venezuelan message, followed almost immediately by his message on the financial situation, in which he called the attention of Congress, as he has done in almost every message he has ever written, to the dangers of our present financial system.

The first message was received in a spirit worthy of the Republican party in the days when it was a party of patriotism and not of petty politics. The second message was answered by the introduction from the Committee on Ways and Means of two bills. The first a revenue bill, answering the statement of the Secretary of the Treasury that no more revenue was needed, by providing for a protective tariff equal to the wildest dreams of Major McKinley. This bill was rushed through the House under the apparent assumption that the Secretary of the Treasury did not know what he was talking about: a cheap campaign trick, to prove the falsity of his statement by denying it without arguments. It showed the country that the Republican party had learned nothing from the lesson taught it by the disasters incident to the McKinley Tariff law.

The second bill introduced by the Committee on Ways and Means was a bond bill. This bill, as originally drawn in its first section, authorized the Secretary of the Treasury to sell short term three per cent. bonds for the redemption of the greenbacks. In its second section it authorized the Secretary to issue certificates of indebtedness to supply temporary deficiencies. This latter section was practically unobjectionable. The first section by implication conferred upon the Secretary the power to impound the greenbacks. When the provisions of the first section

of the bill became known, the soft money Republicans revolted. To keep the majority in line the bill, as finally introduced, contained the proviso that nothing in the act should "be construed to repeal or modify an act approved May 31, 1878, entitled 'An act to forbid the further retirement of United States legal tender notes.'" The bill was then passed. The sound money Democrats voted against it on the ground that it did not go far enough in the direction of sound money. The free silver men voted against it because it went too far. The majority had had the opportunity of coming out squarely for sound money, and of making the Republican party the party of the single gold standard and of insuring its success in 1896. It failed to rise to the emergency and straddled the issue. The Democratic party was beaten in 1894 owing to its position on the currency question. The people had every reason to expect some relief from the party they then returned to power. Instead of giving that relief, the majority has gone on record against the retirement of the greenbacks and, by the speeches of its leaders, in favor of international bimetallism, an untried theory, hardly commendable to practical men.

Having made its record in favor of the Republican theory of finance, the party of high moral ideas, impelled by the business-like policy of wasting time and doing nothing, sailed over smooth seas until the appropriation bill for the District of Columbia was reported to the House, and then out of a clear sky came a hurricane. The District of Columbia owns no charitable institutions. Private organizations supported in part by appropriations from the Government perform the work of charity in the District. When the item of "charities" was reached in debate in Committee of the Whole a fierce attack was made upon the principle of government support for private charities. It was claimed that no sectarian animus existed, and yet the appropriations for the G. A. R. Temporary Home, and the Negro Orphan Asylum were allowed to remain in the bill while all appropriations for Roman Catholic institutions were stricken out. Absolute consistency would have required that the G. A. R. Temporary Home and the Negro Orphan Asylum should have met the same fate as the Catholic institutions. The American Protective Association showed its strength; its orders were obeyed when the Catholic institutions were discriminated against, and the G. A. R. and Negro vote were not antagonized. When the bill was reported back to the

House it was beaten on its final passage. A. P. A. Republicans were willing to vote for that organization in committee where no roll is called, but feared to go on record in the House in favor of intolerance. It was the first appropriation bill beaten since the war.

Up to the present time, with the exception of a few unimportant bills, no legislation has been enacted. The House, despite its promises of a business session, has done nothing of good, unless that it has clearly defined the principles of the Republican party. It has shown that the party is ruled by religious bigotry and is not in favor of sound money.

The Senate at least has the courage of its convictions ; it is absolutely in control of the advocates of free silver. The House has proved itself unequal to the great emergency of the hour, the financial situation. With everything in its favor, with numbers, with able leadership, and with brains, it has proved itself incompetent to enact legislation ; it has no convictions ; it has been shifty and cowardly. If its opponents will profit by its mistakes and declare for sound money at Chicago, the next President of the United States will be a Democrat.

GEO. B. McCLELLAN.

V.

WHEN Congress met last December the political situation discovered a Democratic Executive seeking to maintain the parity between gold and silver on a free-trade platform, a Senate composed of Republicans, Democrats and Populists, without legislative capacity from a party standpoint, and a House with a Republican majority of one hundred and thirty-four members. The question for solution, from a party standpoint, was how to manage each of these branches of government so as to produce the most favorable impression upon the country for the impending Presidential election.

The Republicans, enjoying the tidal wave of success in 1894, believed that a still greater one would come in 1896, giving them control of the White House and of the Senate. Their policy was therefore one of waiting and caution. The Democrats, struggling under the load of defeat, were looking for new questions of issue and new planks for a Presidential platform. The Populists

were a small obstructive element, having the balance of power in the Senate.

Under these circumstances it was generally understood that no economic legislation of a purely partisan character could be carried through Congress and receive the sanction of the President.

The partisan and independent press of the country recognized this condition of affairs. The Republican and Democratic newspapers were not advocating any general line of partisan policy for their respective representatives in Congress, because nothing could be accomplished. The Republican newspapers, however, advised caution in all things, while the Democratic newspapers wanted a change, in fact, anything to relieve the party of the burden which it was carrying. Naturally then newspaper criticism of Congress would develop, not on the line of what ought to be done from a party standpoint, but rather on the line of what is feasible under existing conditions.

The Republican newspapers were generally fearful of the consequences of an overwhelming Republican majority in the House. The last word which each Republican Congressman received from his constituents was: "Beware of your excessive power in the House." This warning was reiterated in all public prints in his district, so that when he reached Washington at the beginning of the session he was loaded with caution. Naturally, Speaker Reed reflected this sentiment in his speech of acceptance. At once it was heralded throughout the country by Democratic newspapers that Mr. Reed had announced a "do-nothing" policy for the House. They alleged that his presidential aspirations would stifle all efforts at legislation. As their hope of party success existed in creating dissensions and ill-feeling in the Republican ranks, they even charged that he would favor this policy or suppress that, according as it benefited his presidential canvass or injured that of a rival. These charges failed in their object. No Republican was deceived by them. How utterly unfounded such insinuations were, has been demonstrated by the course of legislation up to the present time. Indeed, Republicans agree with unanimity that Mr. Reed's course in the present Congress has been the same as it would have been, if he had been in no sense a presidential candidate. His object has been, and is, to place the party upon the best possible footing, in accordance with the national Republican principles, for the contest next November.

What, then, was the first refutation of the press criticism that this was to be a "do-nothing" House? It came when the President sent in his message on the Venezuelan boundary. The President's action in this matter was different from his usual course in foreign affairs. It gave some color to the newspaper criticism that it originated from political motives, in consonance with the general policy of the Democratic party to seek new planks for their national platform. Without discussing this point, it is only necessary to say that the Republican party derived its fair share of public approbation from the incident by prompt action in passing the bill creating the Boundary Commission.

At this point the charge of Jingoism against Congress was made by many influential newspapers. Even if an element of Jingoism did exist in the action of the President and of Congress, the general result has been beneficial. A national patriotic spirit has been aroused throughout the country.

The chief result, however, was to educate the country on its foreign policy. The strict constructionists said that the Monroe doctrine did not apply to the Venezuelan difficulty, and the liberal interpreters said that it did. Out of the whole discussion a new doctrine has been developed, the purport of which is to compel arbitration in territorial disputes between European powers and American republics. Without committing the United States to the policy of an armed intervention in behalf of arbitration, it is now understood that each case must be decided on its own merits, and that no American republic can with impunity be "oppressed" by a European power. This does not rest upon any resolution or statute passed by Congress, but simply upon the public patriotic sentiment as developed by the extended consideration of the Monroe doctrine.

The Venezuelan incident has also served to arouse the friends of international arbitration in Great Britain. It is to be hoped that the spirit of arbitration will so thoroughly permeate the people of Great Britain and the United States that war will be forever impossible between the two great branches of the Anglo-Saxon race.

An unexpected sequence to the Venezuelan flurry was the impending crisis in the Government finances. Foreign investors interpreted the message to mean war. They were in haste to get rid of their American securities, and, therefore, brought on a

panic in the American market. At once there was fear of a raid upon the gold reserve in the Treasury. As the House originates all financial legislation, it took hold at once of the problems suggested by the low state of the gold reserve and settled them, as far as it was concerned, in a business-like manner. Legislation proposed by the House had three objects in view; the maintenance of the gold reserve by selling three per cent. bonds by popular subscription to redeem the United States legal tender notes, the issue of United States certificates of indebtedness not exceeding \$50,000,000 to provide for the temporary deficiencies of revenue, and the fifteen per cent. increase of tariff rates to meet the expenses of the Government. These measures would hold the gold reserve intact, and would prevent encroachment upon it to pay the expenses of the Government. They are based upon the strong business sense which the Republican party has always displayed in the management of the nation's finances. If the Republicans had had complete control of the executive and legislative branches of the Government, they would have adopted a straight protective tariff instead of the fifteen per cent. horizontal increase. It was supposed that a free-trade Democratic President would permit a bill providing for a horizontal increase to become a law, especially as the increased revenue was needed to cover the regular government expenses. These bills passed the House and were sent to the Senate, where they have been practically killed by silver fanaticism. Instead of the bond bill a substitute providing for the free coinage of silver was sent back to the House. If the tariff bill passes the Senate, it will be vetoed by the President, since the success of the new loan has furnished temporary financial relief for the Treasury.

The newspapers throughout the country are properly holding the Senate responsible for the failure to furnish increased revenues to the Government.

Ever since the adoption of the Reed rules in the Fifty-first Congress, there has been a tendency on the part of the Western press and people to approve the business methods of the House and to censure the dilatory methods of the Senate. "Senatorial courtesy" might properly have served a good purpose fifty years ago when the number of senators was much smaller. As practised now, it means obstruction to legislation. It places the con-

trol of the Senate practically in the hands of the minority. As long as it prevails, a prejudice against the Senate will exist in the public mind. The people do not care to have their vital material interests subjected to the whims of a few senators who are banded together for a single object, and who act outside of party lines. In the present Congress, where the policies of the Senate and House are so widely different, a careful reading of the newspapers of the Central-Western States will show that, in that district at least, the House is constantly rising and the Senate is falling in the public estimation. It might be added that a similar sentiment appears to prevail throughout the country.

The prompt action in the bond and revenue matters has disarmed all criticism to the effect that this was a House with a "do-nothing" policy. Indeed, those newspapers which at first found fault are now expressing the opinion that the House is the conservative business branch of Congress.

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